

WW

28

AN 7

Eg

No. 98.

IN ASSEMBLY,

March 7, 1842.

REPORT**Of the committee on medical societies and colleges,
on the memorial of the New-York Eye Infirmary,
praying for aid from the State.**

Mr. Spence, from the committee on medical societies and colleges, to whom was referred the memorial of the directors of the New-York Eye Infirmary praying for a continuance of the aid heretofore extended to them by the Legislature,

REPORTS :

That from a full examination of the New-York Eye Infirmary, in all its departments, your committee can, with great confidence, bear testimony to its eminent usefulness, and assure this honorable body that its appropriations are wisely extended in furthering the benevolent objects of this institution.

The objects of the New-York Eye Infirmary are to receive indigent persons afflicted with diseases of the eye and ear, from all parts of the State, and afford them such relief as their cases admit of, without expense to themselves. The register of the institution shows that patients have been received from every county of the State.

The character of the Infirmary is essentially charitable. The patients receive advice, attendance and medicines gratuitously ; and the surgeons, four in number, perform their duties without any remunera-

tion. By the annual report of the last year it appears that more than one thousand persons have been under the charge of the surgeons within the year, of whom a very large portion were cured; and that since the foundation of the institution in 1820, more than twenty-one thousand patients have received from it various degrees of relief.

The expenses of the Infirmary grow out of the rent of the buildings, which must necessarily be large to accommodate its patients, salaries to an apothecary and house servants, medicines, surgical instruments and other minor contingent expenses.

The grant from the State was \$1,000 per annum, and the sum of \$120 is derived from the interest of a small permanent fund; making the whole income of the Infirmary during the receipt of the grant from the State \$1,120.

The commissioners appointed by the Governor and Senate, under the act of May 13th, 1840, to supervise the different charitable institutions in the first Senate district, made the following report of the Eye Infirmary:

"The New-York Eye Infirmary was founded in 1820. It is under the control of a board of directors, and is regularly attended by four eminent surgeons, who give their services gratuitously. Since the establishment of this institution, more than twenty thousand patients have been treated at the Infirmary, for almost every variety of disease of the eye and ear. Perhaps no similar institution in this country has been more productive of greater benefit to the public."

The small sum appropriated by the Legislature for this institution has been productive of immense benefit to the afflicted, thousands of whom, without the assistance and able treatment they have received at this Infirmary, would have become helpless paupers, and consequently dependent upon public charity for their support; so that, if we view the small annuity granted by the Legislature, only with a cold and heartless reference to pecuniary considerations, we should find a great saving to the public treasure.

But when considered in a different light, and we behold the thousands who probably have been saved from total blindness—that worst of all human afflictions—and made useful members of society, we can not but feel that, with reference to a benevolent charity, the Legisla-

ture has ample reasons for continuing its fostering aid to this most useful association.

The Infirmary does not rest its claims to the bounty of the State *solely* upon the merit of the public good derived from the exercise of public charity to the poor affected with diseases of the eye and ear. As a school of ophthalmic surgery the Infirmary now enjoys the highest reputation; and pupils annually go from it to every portion of the State, well informed in this branch of their science. When it is recollected that these students may annually see more than one thousand cases of disease of the eye and ear; hear them explained, and their proper modes of treatment prescribed by those who have had such ample experience as the Eye Infirmary affords, it must be evident that an opportunity for understanding these diseases is here afforded, far superior to any elsewhere to be found in America.

Two hundred students for continuing the learning aid in this most useful connection.

The Indiana does not rest its claim on the bounty of the State solely upon the merit of the public good derived from the exercise of public charity to the poor afflicted with diseases of the eye and ear. As a school of ophthalmic surgery the Indiana now enjoys the highest reputation; and pupils annually go from it to every portion of the State, well instructed in this branch of their science. When it is recollected that these students may annually see more than one thousand cases of diseases of the eye and ear; that their explanation and their proper modes of treatment prescribed by them who have had such ample experience as the Eye Infirmary affords, it must be evident that an opportunity for witnessing their progress is here afforded, far superior to any elsewhere to be found in America.